

# Nursing in Action

INTERIM REPORT ON PROVINCIAL NURSING INITIATIVES SEPTEMBER 1991

## Message from the Minister

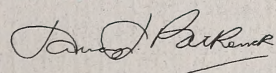
Significant progress has been made on nursing issues over the past two years, since the Premier's nursing initiatives were announced in 1988. I am delighted to have this opportunity to communicate directly to you through this interim report entitled "**Nursing in Action**." A final report will be published in 1993/94.

Assisted by nurses around the province, Provincial Nursing Consultant Sharon Snell and the Alberta Health team, have made tremendous strides in all areas of the key nursing initiatives. This report outlines the numerous and diverse activities conducted on behalf of nurses. I want to say thank you for the tremendous effort and commitment of nurses who are participating on working committees and taking action to achieve the goals of these initiatives.

I fully acknowledge however, that the past year has not been without its difficulties and disappointments for nurses and other health professionals in the province. Many of you have been affected by the changes in our health system. Changes in hospital and community funding, program alterations, as well as the overall emphasis "to manage better" have affected, in some instances, the numbers and nature of nursing positions.

I remain committed to enhancing the role of nurses in this province and stress that as valued members of our health team, you play an integral and critical role in the future. I continue to believe that nurses will provide important leadership in managing and sustaining our health system through this decade and into the 21st Century.

We all face new challenges. Nurses are now called upon for their unique expertise in re-thinking, in restructuring and in re-defining roles to move us forward to a new vision of health services for Albertans. I have the confidence that we can move forward to that vision together.



**Honourable Nancy J. Betkowski**  
Minister of Health

## Outline of Major Initiatives

### Worklife Initiatives

#### Job Enhancement Fund – 145 Projects Funded

Established in 1989 to address work life concerns of nurses, Job Enhancement is a four year project with two million dollars per year available to fund pilot projects in hospitals, nursing homes, health units and mental health clinics. To date there have been 145 diverse projects funded.

In response to the proposals submitted, three quarters of the funding in the first two years was allocated to "professional recognition" initiatives ranging from basic staff education programs to advanced clinical practice models. In the third year, however, the focus changed with 40 percent of the funding for 1991-92 being allocated for innovative team building projects and to pilot decentralized decision making models.

#### Number of Job Enhancement Projects Funded by Issue Category

Issue	1989 - 91 (2 years)	1991 - 92 (1 year)
Decision making	5	5
Team building	1	11
Professional recognition	57	33
Childcare	5	1
Workload control	4	1
Stress management	5	7
Scheduling	4	1
Safety	3	1
Non-nursing duties	1	0

85

60

Although it may be premature to comment on whether there have been any changes in attitudes, values and management practices resulting from the various Job Enhancement projects, we are receiving positive feedback from project evaluation reports.

*"The evaluation revealed that the program was successful, not only in enhancing the work life and job satisfaction of the nursing staff involved, but also in enhancing the care of obstetrical patients attending the hospital."*

Project: Advanced Obstetrics Teaching Program  
Fort Saskatchewan General Hospital

*"The Job Enhancement Advisory Committee has encouraged the hospital to evaluate alternatives to the status quo and to listen to staff when deciding on a course of action."*

Project: Stress in the Workplace/ Job Motivation/Developing Self Esteem  
Stettler Hospital Complex

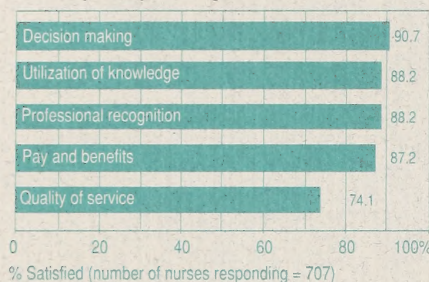
The calibre of proposals has improved from year to year and competition for available funding has increased. The Advisory Committee has struggled in its deliberations - what is very basic for one organization may be considered as job enhancement for another. The challenge in the final two years of the project is to identify strategies that will maintain sustained effort and positive change beyond the life of the Fund.



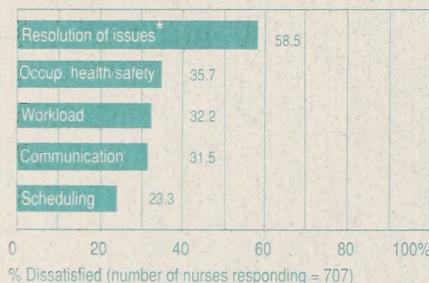
### Results of the Community-based nursing worklife survey, Spring 1991

Nurses working in community health, home care, community mental health and community-based occupational health asked Alberta Health to study the worklife concerns unique to their environment. Preliminary results of the spring survey are shown below:

#### Level of Satisfaction Top 5 Major Categories



#### Level of Dissatisfaction Top 5 Major Categories



\* Worklife, staffing and education issues.

Final results will be available in the fall from your professional association or the Provincial Nursing Consultant's office.

*"It is good to see somebody is asking about community health. We are a small group and I feel the government does not know about us or the potential we have."*

Comment from worklife questionnaire

#### Safety at work: steps taken to address infection control concerns in long term care

- Funding was provided to facilitate the development of standards and educational materials. These will

## Educational and Personnel Planning Initiatives

### Adding relief hours in budgets—1989-1993

- In response to nurses' concerns about insufficient time to attend educational activities, Alberta Health funded an additional 8 hours per year of "relief staffing" for each F.T.E. nurse (LPNs, RPNs, and RNs in nursing homes and hospitals) to attend educational activities.

### Satisfying Adult Critical Care Nursing (ACCN) Needs

- To address critical care nursing needs the post-basic certificate course in adult critical care nursing at the Misericordia was expanded and a similar program was established at the Foothills Hospital. Also, the Foothills now offers a distance-delivered program to meet the needs of nurses in rural Alberta. Alberta Health provided funds in 1989-1991 to support the clinical practicums of nurses in the critical care certificate courses.

### Enhancing education in gerontological nursing

- In order to improve care of the elderly, Alberta Health consulted with seniors and nurses to develop recommendations on changes needed in nurses' educational programs.
- Alberta Health is working with a committee of nurses to update the content and the delivery of a post-basic gerontological nursing program which will be more accessible and

will carry university transfer credit. This program will be implemented in the fall of 1992.

### Meeting the Needs of Rural Nurses

- Grande Prairie Regional College has prepared a proposal to offer a part-time rural nursing post-basic specialty course. The college is working with the Canada/Alberta Northern Development Sub-Agreement, Advanced Education, and Alberta Health on a feasible financial plan for a pilot project.

### Making it easier to go back to school

- Premier's Nursing Initiatives' funding was used by Alberta Advanced Education to expand the University of Calgary and University of Lethbridge post-basic baccalaureate programs from 95 to 170 seats per year - almost doubling the opportunity for nurses to get their degrees.
- A new post-basic baccalaureate program is underway at Athabasca University, which allows nurses to study at home at their own pace. Currently 478 RNs are enrolled and every qualified RN who has applied has been accepted.

### Piloting programs to prepare more nurses at the baccalaureate level

Advanced Education is funding the development of new models to improve linkages between programs offered in colleges, hospital-based schools and universities, and to

### Safety at work cont'd. . .

assist long term care facilities in providing infection prevention and control programs to promote the safety and well-being of staff and residents. Manuals for LPNs and other health care workers are available through the Long Term Care Inservice Resource Centres.

- About 400 nurses attended two symposia on infection control to discuss how the standards can be applied to their work settings.
- To minimize the risk of needlestick

injuries to health care workers, a plan has been developed to reduce the number of needlestick injuries, including:

- a survey of nurses and facilities/agencies in the province on policies and procedures, the number of injuries and the resources to prevent and/or follow up after needlestick injuries. Results and recommendations will be widely distributed.
- Watch for a poster campaign this fall to further promote safe practices. ♦



*Planning Initiatives cont'd. from page 2. . .*

enable more nurses to obtain baccalaureate education.

Where are we at on these programs?

- Red Deer College and the University of Alberta began a pilot in September 1990.

- The Edmonton Collaborative model will start in September 1991.

- A proposal for a Calgary Conjoint Program is being discussed by representatives of the institutions, Advanced Education and Alberta Health.

- The university and colleges in Lethbridge and Medicine Hat are working together to develop a proposal.

### **Bridging Programs**

- A Licensed Practical Nurse to RN bridging program has been approved by Advanced Education as a 3-year pilot program at Grande Prairie Regional College. The first group of students will begin the bridging portion of the program in the spring of 1992.

- A proposal for a Registered Psychiatric Nurse (RPN) to baccalaureate in nursing program is being prepared by the University of Alberta for submission to Advanced Education.

### **Starting the First Ph.D. Nursing program in Canada**

The first Ph.D. Nursing program in Canada was started in January 1991 at the University of Alberta. This program will contribute to advancing nursing research, education and practice in Alberta.

### **Planning for the Future in the Areas of Mental Health/Psychiatry**

Alberta Health has consulted with various groups across the province, in order to identify future service needs and educational needs for RPNs and RNs in the mental health field. The views expressed have formed the basis for a plan to ensure adequate preparation and advancement for RPNs and RNs to meet the future requirements. Alberta Health and Advanced Education will be working with nursing groups to begin implementing the plan this fall. ♦

## **New Initiatives to Enhance Nurses' Roles**

### **Implementing the Alberta Provincial Nursing Action Plan (PNAP)**

*What is PNAP?*

- It is an action oriented process to address issues, namely:

1. Personnel Planning - roles, staff mix, care-delivery models
2. Education - formal education (basic/specialty), orientation/certification
3. Worklife - recognition, safety, work support

*What makes it unique?*

- This is the first nursing steering committee to have such broad-based representation and far-reaching mandate. The 16 organizations forming this Steering Committee represent the whole spectrum of nursing (RPNs, LPNs and RNs) and includes unions; professional and employer associations; nurse educators and administrators; government; physicians; and consumers. The mandate for all PNAP participants is focused on seeking consensus regarding the future of nursing and facilitating development and implementation of actions and strategies.

- As well, nearly 200 participants from across Alberta will be involved in the three Activity Teams to develop action plans in the three key areas.

*How will PNAP help resolve the urgent and long standing concerns of Nurses?*

*"For the first time we're involving grassroots nurses from the entire spectrum of healthcare; taking their direction on planning for the future of nursing, based on community needs."*

**Kim Evans** – LPN, Edmonton  
(Canadian Health Care Guild)

*"The key thing with PNAP is the unique opportunity to cross boundaries of disciplines and perspectives, to break-down barriers, and to enhance communication and understanding between a variety of groups."*

**Helen Taylor** – RN, Red Deer  
(Health Unit Association of Alberta)

### **Managing better with the new Management Information System (MIS)**

*What is MIS?*

Management Information System (MIS) is a Canada-wide system which will provide hospitals with a method to record, report, and measure statistical, financial, and clinical information more effectively. Alberta Health is working to develop the nursing data component of MIS, to describe nursing services, determine nursing resource needs and use.

*Why is MIS Important?*

The information collected will help managers improve decision-making and help in more effective management of quality patient care.

*What will MIS do for Nursing?*

Nursing MIS will be useful as a tool for nurse managers to make decisions about resources for nursing care.

*"There has been a trend to operate in isolation. MIS provides answers about supplies, programs and why it is feasible or not to have these resources. MIS helps you to prioritize."*

**Berna Moss**, MIS South  
Sub-Committee Member  
Bassano General Hospital

### **Participating in Decision Making**

Alberta Health supports nursing involvement in decision making. In addition to the appointment of staff nurses to the eight provincial hospital boards, as full voting members, there will be continued effort to facilitate participation by nurses at all levels within their work settings.

*"A Nurse, as a full board member with voting privileges, has the wonderful opportunity of assisting fellow Hospital Board Members to better understand why it is so very essential that nursing personnel be part of the decision making process regarding issues pertaining to Nursing."*

**Glenda Labelle** – RN  
Nurse appointment to the Hospital Board at Foothills Hospital, Calgary ♦



## TELL US WHAT YOU ARE DOING!

Please write to us about any strategies you've implemented that we don't know about. We can share this information with interested groups.

### Contacts for More Information

#### 1. General Information

- Sharon Snell  
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#### 2. Provincial Nursing Action Plan

- Suzanne Clark  
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#### 3. Nursing MIS

- Bruce Finkel
- Sharon Laskowski  
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#### 4. Job Enhancement

- Sara Wright  
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If you have any questions, concerns or information you want to share please write:

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Sixteen months ago, as one government initiative in response to a call for action from Alberta nurses, my position of Provincial Nursing Consultant was created. Now I am pleased to be able to share with you this report on my role and the highlights of what has been accomplished to date on nursing initiatives and what further results can be expected in the near future.

One point that I can confidently state at this stage is that in Alberta, "nurses have been heard and we are continuing to listen." Across the province numerous developments have taken place and many others are underway or planned to respond to the concerns of nurses.

In my role as facilitator for nursing initiatives at the provincial level, I advise the senior managers of Alberta Health and Alberta Advanced Education on all matters pertaining to nursing.

I provide the nursing perspective and input into policy and program development and assess the impact of specific policy formulation on nursing. Although not a "content" expert on all issues, I can act effectively on behalf of Alberta nurses by working in a collaborative way and drawing on the expertise of stakeholder groups, nursing associations and nurses at all levels of practice. We've established and continue to maintain linkage with key individuals and groups in Alberta and throughout Canada.

With my personal natural inclination towards "action" I see and value the extensive involvement of nurses already actively participating in numerous projects across Alberta. These activities have been planned on a province-wide basis and while they may not always reach you immediately at a personal level, the emphasis has been on targeting priorities to meet the

broad issues of personnel planning, education and workforce.

These three priority issues not only address many of the day to day concerns of nurses, but as well provide the longer term direction for the future role of nursing in Alberta.

During this time of transition and challenge within Alberta's health system, it is more and more apparent that the future will demand new approaches and new roles of nurses. Today presents the opportunity to learn about doing things differently, and the opportunity to prepare for the future. Several Job Enhancement pilot projects currently underway have the potential for expansion and acceptance across the province as we move to that future.

Leadership from nurses will be required in the development of alternate care delivery models which will be focused on the client and based on an interdisciplinary team concept. The service lines between sectors will be less distinct and nurses will need to demonstrate flexibility in meeting the needs of Albertans across the continuum of prevention and health care.

Nurses must and will continue to shape nursing to meet the changing needs in practice, management, education and research. It is the collective imagination and action that makes the true difference and marks the progress for nursing in Alberta - progress and initiatives that are not the end of a process but merely the beginning.

*Sharon E. Snell*

Sharon E. Snell

**Alberta**  
HEALTH

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